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Human rights questions: implementation of human rights instruments

Torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment: programme budget implications of the draft resolution contained in document A/C.3/53/L.23

Statement submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly

1. By operative paragraph 1 of draft resolution A/C.3/53/L.23, the General Assembly would welcome the report of the Committee against Torture,[1] submitted in accordance with the provision of article 24 of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and authorize the Secretary-General to extend its spring sessions by one additional week on a regular basis.

2. The draft resolution relates to programme 19, Human rights, subprogramme 2, Supporting human rights bodies and organs, of the medium-term plan for the period 1998–2001. Related activities are reflected in section 22, Human rights, paragraph 22.48 (a), subparagraphs (i)–(iii), of the programme budget for the biennium 1998–1999.

3. The proposed extension of the spring sessions of the Committee against Torture would require full meeting servicing and interpretation in 4 official languages of the United Nations during 5 working days, with 2 meetings per day, or an additional 10 meetings annually. Provisions would also be required to cover the cost of daily subsistence allowance of the 10 members of the Committee for a period of 7 days per year.

4. The programme of work included under section 22, Human rights, of the programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999 would be modified as follows:

Subprogramme 2. Supporting human rights bodies and organs,

Activities

(a) Servicing of intergovernmental and expert bodies

(i) Substantive servicing of meetings: Committee against Torture. One hundred meetings (50 annually).

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5. The additional costs entailed by the extension of the spring session of the Committee in 1999 would be as follows:

	United States dollars
Section 22, Human rights	
Subsistence of 10 committee members (seven days)	19 000
Section 1B, General Assembly affairs and conference services	
Meeting services and interpretation	35 000
Pre-session documentation	168 000
In-session documentation	15 700
Summary records	90 300
Post-session documentation	17 100
Other requirements	6 800
Total, section 1B	**332 900**

6. The above estimates for conference-servicing are based on the theoretical assumption that no part of these requirements would be met from within the permanent conference-servicing capacity included under section 1B, General Assembly affairs and conference services, of the programme budget for the biennium 1998–1999. The extent to which the Organization's permanent conference-servicing capacity would need to be supplemented by temporary assistance resources can be determined only in the light of the calendar of conferences and meetings for 1998–1999. Provision has, however, been made under section 1B of the programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999 not only for meetings programmed at the time of budget preparations but also for meetings which might be authorized subsequently, provided that the number and distribution of meetings and conferences are consistent with the pattern of meetings of past years. As a result, no additional appropriation would be required under section 1B of the programme budget.

7. No resources have been included under section 22, Human rights, of the programme budget for the biennium 1998–1999 to cover the additional requirements of $19,000 for the subsistence allowance of the 10 members of the Committee. At this stage, it is not anticipated that these requirements could be absorbed within the provisions included under section 22 of the programme budget.

8. It will be recalled that, under the procedure established by the General Assembly in its resolutions 41/213 of 19 December 1986 and 42/211 of 21 December 1987, a contingency fund is established for each biennium to accommodate additional expenditures derived from legislative mandates not provided for in the proposed programme budget. Under this procedure, if additional expenditures are proposed that exceed the resources available from the contingency fund, the activities concerned can be implemented only through redeployment of resources from low-priority areas or modifications of existing activities. Otherwise, such additional activities will have to be deferred to a later biennium.

9. No activities could be identified, at this stage, for termination, deferral, curtailment or modification under section 22, Human rights, of the programme budget for the biennium 1998–1999 in order to accommodate the additional requirements of $19,000 referred to above.

10. Should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/C.3/53/L.23, an additional provision of $19,000 would be required over and above the resources approved under section 22, Human rights, of the programme budget for the biennium 1998–1999. The additional requirements for the year 2000 would be dealt with in the context of the preparation of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001.

Notes

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 44* (A/53/44).